

ST PAT'S MATTERS

A magazine for parishioners and friends of St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta



*Thank You
for the
priestly hands
that give us
Christ.*

August, 2020| Issue 103

Editorial

Since our last issue 'went to press', St Pat's is now the recipient of a double whammy. Not only have we had to bear parish life being drastically affected by the 'villain virus', COVID-19, but in early June another adverse blow was dealt us when news broke of Fr Bob's unexpected, premature departure from the Cathedral Parish to take effect by 5th July!

Needless to say many pages have been dedicated to Fr Bob's departure — his last Mass, the farewell luncheon, tributes from within the parish and beyond, and photos to visually record people's affection for this beloved and much admired priest.

Another in depth feature revolves around the RCIA, — coverage of the Initiation of five Candidates, plus articles by Deacon Rod, team member John Starkey on becoming a Catholic and comments from the Neophytes themselves.

Also on the faith front, in her article *Walking with Christ*, Khushid Jilla writes about her conversion journey.

How do you get to read about racehorses in the early days of Parramatta? Through Judith Dunn of course, who continues to educate us on matters historical via research into the lives of parishioners interred in St Patrick's Cemetery.

On the virus front, Geraldine Lilley writes about how the virus affected her life; as well there are updates, revealing its impact on Special Religious Education in state schools, the Sacramental Programme and Sunday Morning Teas.

Once more we have input from a Modern Mary, whose desire it is to promote the cause, that modern mothers matter.

George Manassa, founder and host of the Radio Show, *The Catholic Toolbox*, is a recent addition to our regular contributors. Here he reports on the meeting with Fr John Rizzo.

'What does it mean to be a 'City Church'? Martin Graham has penned an expose well worth reading.

And does a *Walk Down Memory Lane* sound enticing? See what Silvana Rechichi's submission is all about.

In this uncertain time of turmoil, like Mary of the Cross, let's **Lean on God**.

M Polizzi

Farewell Fr Bob, Faithful Shepherd



Shockwaves rippled through the parish community when news broke in late May that Fr Bob was leaving St Patrick's just months shy of his 6 year tenure as Parish Priest and Dean of the Cathedral. Disbelief also abounded that it was happening to us whilst still coping with the restrictions Covid-19 was inflicting upon parish life, pastorally and spiritually.

Fr Bob's last Sunday Mass at 11am on 5th July was a very emotional affair, both for our departing pastor as well as those in the congregation. Five priests — Fr Chris del Rosario, Fr John Rizzo, Fr John Paul Escarlan, Fr Jack Green (ordained with Fr Chris 30/11/18) and Fr Joseph Murphy, (from Sydney Archdiocese ordained 3/8/19)—processed in with Fr Bob to concelebrate Mass.

Many eyes filled with tears as Fr Bob stood at the "ambo" struggling to compose himself to start the liturgy, asking those present to "bear with me. *This is a very emotional time for me as I stand here before you in my final act as your pastor. I think of the greatness that has occurred over these last six years and it is fitting that we end with the Eucharist to give thanks to God for all that has happened and to go to the future with hope and with trust in Him.*"

Fr Chris spoke at the end of Mass: "I've been talking extensively with Fr Bob over these past 18 months and he has shown himself to be an exceptional pastor. And when he decided it was best for him to leave the diocese, I said, 'It will be extremely hard.' He said, 'Yes, it will be hard on me.' I said, 'No, not on you, on the parish.'"

"Look around, this is your work. I said in my homily last week the measure of a pastor is how much he is willing to die for his flock, how much he exhibits Christ to his people. Every day for the last 6 years Fr Bob, you have lived for these people, you have died for these people; you have shown Jesus Christ to these people. Best of all you are leading them to Heaven and no one can put a price on that.....You have done that for every single year of your 32 years of priesthood.....an exceptional priest for Jesus Christ.."

And following Fr Chris' tribute, to our beloved Parish Priest, a very, very sustained ovation of appreciation erupted from everyone, in affirmation of what he had said about Fr Bob. In response, Fr Bob admitted to being overwhelmed and humbled by the response, also mentioning his appreciation of all the support received from parishioners when his departure from the Cathedral was announced.

Regrettably, our parish has lost a true shepherd, as has the Diocese of Parramatta, with Fr Bob's decision to seek incardination in another Diocese.

Fr Bob's Farewell Gathering.

How blessed were we that the luncheon occurred during the period COVID-19 restrictions in NSW had been eased. Imagine trying to have it now with the return to harsher measures to thwart the spread of contagion. Most likely the luncheon would have been a non event!

As is the norm, loyal parishioners began arriving from as early as 8am to begin setting up tables and chairs in the hall and in the cloister, some prepared disposal cutlery; some rolled up their sleeves and began making salads; and our famous BBQers set to preparing for cooking.



As usual more people turned up than had RSVPd!

Was it Fr Chris' fault when, at the end of Fr Bob's final Mass, he invited everyone to 'come on over'!!

So the servers were set a challenge to make the food feed more than had been catered for. They managed somehow.

Cathy Dearie was on hand to take photos;

Despite the sad reason behind the occasion, it was so heartwarming to be able to gather as a community. f



At the luncheon, Fr Bob thanked all the people who came to say 'goodbye' and wish him 'Godspeed' for the next chapter of his priestly ministry.

Then in the following week's bulletin, 12th July, he posted the following note to all St Pat's parishioners.

Thank -You Note from Fr Bob.

Dear friends,

Last Sunday, [5th July] you gave me a wonderful gift -- a farewell to remember for all my days. I have been overwhelmed with all the sentiments, kind words, messages and well wishes that came my way for weeks leading up to my departure.

Thank you to all the ladies who baked wonderful cakes and meals to make sure I didn't go hungry -- I didn't.

Also, thank you to all who donated to the 'Bob Bossini Retirement Fund', I will spend it wisely. Of course, I am not retiring and I look forward to the plan God has in mind for me.

God bless you all and feel free to email me from time to time.

Fr Bob.

Email: fr.bbossini@gmail.com

farewell tributes for our dedicated pastor

Apart from tributes and accolades at the farewell, Fr Bob had been inundated with a plethora of plaudits via email and Facebook from the time his departure from the parish became public knowledge. Shows the esteem in which he is held.



From Naomi Mazzitelli:

I am speaking here today as the Chairperson of the PPC, a role that I would never have undertaken had it not been for the encouragement of one person — Father Bob.

I know I speak for all of us when I say you have led by example and in doing so have enabled us to step outside our comfort zones and become more pro-active where our Parish is concerned.

I'd like to remind you, Father Bob, of your vision for a self-sustaining parish when you said the following in March 2019, for an article by Mary Brazell in the "Catholic Outlook".

My philosophy when it comes to parish life is that the priests are here for an appointed time, but the parishioners are always here. I encourage them to be able to take hold of the parish themselves, so that it becomes their parish, rather than me doing everything and directing them – the initiative needs to come from them.

We as priests are not caretakers of the parish, we're here to animate the parish, and to lead it to becoming the parish of the people.

I'm sure, everyone would agree with me when I say YOU are truly God's disciple amongst us. Father Bob you walk the walk and talk the talk. Catholic Formation is your strength and that knowledge has been shared with us through your tireless work in the various groups of the parish - from the PPC, Legion of Mary and Live Christ, Share Christ; to your school visits and involvement with the sacramental program and *Light Up St Pat's*. Because of you we have a better understanding of Vatican 2's belief in the '**Apostolate of the Laity**' and the hopes and wishes for our Church within the scope of the 2020 Plenary Council.

Finally, we all know you have a wicked sense of humour and discerning taste in red wines,— but not so much in choosing a winning football team! That one failure aside, THANKYOU Father Bob, for all that you are and all that you have given in your time here at St. Pat's. We will miss you greatly.



Dylan Lal spoke from the heart on behalf of the Credo Youth Group. His tribute spoke of their gratitude for Fr Bob's enduring guidance, encouragement and support in whatever endeavours the groups initiated.

Dylan also declared how grateful he was for Fr Bob's pastoral concern on a personal level.



From Pat Preca, Parish Secretary,

I am not going to talk about how we will miss Fr Bob because I think the show of emotion of the past few weeks is testament to that. What I will talk about is the celebration of Fr Bob and how he has affected our lives.

Fr Bob has been the Parish Priest of St Pat's for the last six years. Before he came I was warned – when he gets cranky he has a temper – so watch out. Can I say, until the last few months, I was yet to see this.

Fr Bob in his role of employer sought out people for different roles and gave them the confidence to achieve in those roles. — whether to manage *Light up St Pat's*, or to take on *Formation* or a position on the PFC (Parish Finance Committee) or PPC, (Parish Pastoral Council). . He could see people's gifts and talents and he gave them a go and backed them 100%. Fr Bob was the wind behind many people's sails.

The Parish has grown under his care both in numbers and in faith. When COVID-19 hit, most churches couldn't close quickly enough. But Fr Bob asked how can we still feed the people of God? His answer? Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and administering Holy Communion to those who asked for it. People came from everywhere to join us. When asked which Masses should be livestreamed – he said all of them. He wanted to keep in touch with the people and he wanted to let the people know 'we are here for you.' (He also wanted to make sure we weren't idle in the office.) He is the true shepherd who leaves no one behind.

We wish Fr Bob a long healthy life where his compassion, meaningful homilies and uncanny sense of humour will benefit a whole new group of people.

Can we raise our virtual glasses to Fr Bob, Shepherd of St Pat's.



On 21st June, OLIVIA LEE posted her tribute on Facebook.

Fr Bob gave me my first major position in leadership when I was 19 and I have never forgotten the trust he showed in my potential.

This gift of trusting lay people and encouraging their talents to serve God is one of the key reasons Fr Bob's ministry at the Cathedral was an incredible one marked with innovation, creativity, humour, and above all - love.

Fr Bob has consistently stepped up to the plate to defend the Parish particularly in the last two years. I have never seen a man more driven to hold power to accountability and demand consistency and integrity from an institutional church leadership team that has divorced itself from its divine mission in favour of temporal power.

I am proud to have served along side you, Fr Bob! Thank you for modelling courage and cross bearing in the most authentic way to us.

Most of all, thank you for your love and friendship.

more tributes to Fr Bob

THE HANDS THAT GAVE ME JESUS

Fr Bob arrived in the parish without much notice. There was no furniture and not many boxes to move in and he was totally dependant on the parish for his needs. He settled in quickly and soon began the task of building a prayerful and socially vibrant and missionary community.

Until the last eight months, I have always seen and regarded Fr Bob as my Parish Priest and Boss, never to be questioned, but only to be obeyed and respected for, like many priests I have worked with, their hands gives me Christ and they deserve honour and respect by virtue of their ordination. Fr Bob's departure from the parish has caused me to reflect deeply on what Fr Bob and the priesthood meant to me.

Apart from the wonderful work he has done to build a vibrant, evangelizing and missionary community, Fr Bob simply put; is a good and Holy Man; a true servant of Christ and great model for the priesthood; one who welcomes the stranger, feeds the hungry, visits the sick, buries the dead, comforts the afflicted, encourages the lost and celebrates people's joyous moments, —to name a few of his virtues.

While a few women lament the lack of appreciation for women in church Ministry, I have never felt inferior in working alongside Fr Bob. He always respected me and considered me as an equal co-worker in our parish's ministry. He sought my advice on matters relating to growing a parish, allowed me to take front seat and never hesitated to confront and correct me when he felt that I was wrong. His presence was empowering and his leadership marked by self-confidence and mutual trust.

What I will miss most is arriving to a warm office on cold winter mornings. It was the simple actions, like turning the heater on after morning Mass before we arrived in the office, that exemplified the caring nature of Fr Bob. He would go an extra mile to make everyone comfortable.

The man whose hands have given me Christ for the last six years has made an indelible, positive mark on my faith in God. May our Lord bless the hands that have blessed many in His Name.

Mili Lee



For the benefit of those who might not know Mili Lee, (whose tribute is adjacent), she is the "lady in red" in the above photo, standing next to Fr Bob, her "Parish Priest" and Boss".

Other Staff from left: Deacon Rod Pirotta, Donna Missio, Pat Preca, Fr Chris del Rosario and Mindy Mercado.



Fr Bob's cutting of the cake was an obligatory part of the proceedings. And he shows genuine delight at the farewell memento of him giving Holy Communion to the Choir. To paraphrase the title of Mili's tribute: ***The hands that gave us Jesus.***



*Fr Bob, Faithful Shepherd,
God bless you for caring for our flock.*



*Your departure saddens us greatly.
St Patrick's Cathedral Parish, Parramatta.*

➡ This is the cover of the Book of Memories that was compiled for Fr Bob as a souvenir of his time of priestly ministry in the Cathedral Parish. A difficult task to scroll through all the photos to come up with a selection portraying the wide range of duties his role encompassed. At the farewell people patiently waited to add their messages of gratitude to Father in the book.

WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?

The beautiful poem, *The Priest* was sourced by Silvana Rechichi. Annette Hartman dedicated it to our beloved Fr Bob as a tribute, which was included in his *Book of Memories* and read at his farewell. June Barrett's story, about husband Jack's sudden death portrays Fr Bob as a priest who "is never too busy to hear another's sorrows....He is a twenty-four hour a day man."

Happier times in 2014
Fr Bob, with Terry O'Brien,
Jack & June Barrett at the
Volunteers Thank-You
Christmas Luncheon.



On 12th February 2016, Jack and I were enjoying a normal pleasant day and I was not prepared for what the day would bring. Jack drove to Coles, as he liked doing the shopping, but most of all he liked being busy. On his return I unloaded the groceries, while he unlocked the gate. Turning round I saw him slowly sink to the ground. I can still remember how blue his eyes were and the amazement in them. I couldn't lift him so got a chair and somehow between us we got inside. This wasn't an unusual occurrence for Jack, it often happened, e.g. when he was playing the pokies and also up at our little shopping centre. The ambulance would arrive, sometimes take him to hospital, other times let him go home.

This time I bandaged his poor bleeding legs and he went and watched the cricket on TV. The afternoon was normal, he spoke to my brother on the phone and then went to bring in the mail. I don't know what made me go out the front, but there he was sitting on our front bench. I believe he had already died. Our next door neighbour's little dog ran in, followed by her owner, Julie. She saw what had happened and called the ambulance.

The ambulance told us to get him on the ground and start CPR. We were on a very narrow veranda about 4ft wide with a garden bed on one side and the bench on the other. There was no way I could get Jack off the bench and onto the ground but the ambulance people were insistent. Suddenly out of the blue, Julie saw Baldo Polizzi driving out of his driveway and he came to help immediately. He knew what to do and they monitored his actions over the phone. To this day I thank God for the help I received at that awful time.

The ambulance men were magnificent, they tried for so long to revive Jack – but I knew all the time he was gone. My daughters started to arrive, we got the ambulance men to take Jack inside to the bedroom. Everyone was stunned – we were just going through the motions of walking and talking. Marian Polizzi rang for the priest. We tried to contact the doctor but the surgery was closed. Suddenly the police arrived, apparently because it was a sudden death and no doctor to say otherwise. They were talking about taking my darling Jack to the Morgue.

THE PRIEST

*No matter where he is located,
the diocesan priest has to be:
the sharer of secrets,
the carrier of burdens,
the fountain of conciliation
And the pillar of strength.*

*Solitary, he is called father by thousands;
poor, he enriches the lives of thousands;
weak, he gives strength to thousands;
unimportant, he does things each day
whose importance cannot be told
in any tongue on earth.*

*He is never too busy to hear another's sorrows;
often too busy to realize his own burdens.*

He is a twenty-four hour a day man.

*He is called from his dinner,
wakened from his sleep, disturbed at his prayers.*

He is at the beck and call of any of his people.

*He is the target of God's enemies,
the magnet of God's needy.*

*Occasionally, he attracts attention,
but usually he works unnoticed and unacclaimed
while he does the noblest work on earth –
keep Christ in the lives of the people.*

This dedicated and caring Priest is Fr Robert Bossini!

Then Father Bob arrived, somehow he coped with this house full of people, family and neighbours who were all bewildered and grieving. He anointed Jack, but then Father Bob didn't rush away or rattle on with meaningless platitudes. He just sat listening to us talk; he was like a rock, someone for us all to lean on. But there was more to it than just giving comfort, because he recognised that to have Jack taken to the Morgue would be devastating for my girls and me. So he waited. He sat beside the bed for at least two hours just being there with us and sharing our sorrow and all the while the police were waiting for the doctor. He had made the conscious choice to stay with us until we could see Jack safely and gently taken by the undertakers.

The doctor arrived about 6.30pm, a death certificate was filled out and the police left. I have no memory of what happened after that – my daughters told me Father Bob waited until the undertakers came and only when he was assured that Jack's body had been treated with respect, and that my fear of his being taken to the Morgue was removed, did he leave.

I don't know if I even thanked Father Bob or said goodbye to him. However, I have never forgotten what Father Bob did that day; he saw a need and fulfilled it. He was calm, caring and compassionate; like I am sure he has been with many of his parishioners. We, in Parramatta, have been blessed by his presence here and he will be sorely missed.

June Barrett

More Priestly Matters

FR CLIFFORD,
WE WELCOME YOU
TO
ST PATRICK'S
CATHEDRAL
PARISH.



Dear friends,

As the 'new kid on the block', let me introduce myself as the new Assistant Priest to St Pat's.

Born in the city of Mumbai (Bombay) India in 1964 to Goan parents Cyril and late Matilda D'souza. I am the second child of three children.

After completing my high school in a Jesuit institution, I joined the Congregation of the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales ** (see below) and was ordained a priest on 4 May 1991. After my appointment to the mission parishes and then a teaching position in the high schools, I was sent to undertake pastoral ministry in the Diocese of Parramatta in 2000.

Since then, I have been appointed to several parishes, the last one being the Parish of Richmond. In the weeks and months to come, I hope to meet and interact with you through the ministries in this parish.



** St Francis de Sales (1567-1622) was the Bishop of Geneva, France. He authored two books which have become spiritual classics. The first one, *Introduction to the Devout Life* and the second, *Treatise on the Love of God*. He is considered as a Doctor of the Church. Known as the Gentleman Saint, here are some of his quotes:

- *nothing is so strong as gentleness, nothing so gentle as real strength;*
- *have patience with all things, but, first of all with yourself;*
- *be who you are and be that well;*
- *never be in a hurry; do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset; and*
- *you can catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than a barrel full of vinegar.*

As I mentioned earlier, I very much look forward to meeting you, so please don't hesitate to introduce yourself to me .

Yours in Christ,

Fr Clifford D'souza,

Fr Clifford's 'nutshell bio' and
Fr Peter's address to parishioners
first appeared in the Sunday Bulletin on 12th July, 2020

From the Dean

Dear people of St Patrick's,

In 2006 I left the Cathedral to work full time as Director of Liturgy in the preparations for World Youth Day in 2008. I am happy to be back at the Cathedral for a short appointment and look forward to connecting with many of the senior parishioners who were part of the Parish back then, and also with those who have joined in recent years.

I recognise that the last few weeks have been for some a time of upheaval and I want to assure you of my support and also that I am available to speak and engage with any of you. My email address is on the bulletin, — peter.williams@parracatholic.org — so please don't hesitate to contact me and I will arrange to speak either on the phone or in person.

With prayers for all of you at this time,

Fr Peter Williams

Dean

Praying for our Priests matters

St. Therese of Lisieux's Prayer for Priests

*O Jesus, eternal Priest,
keep your priests within the shelter of Your Sacred Heart
where none may touch them.*

*Keep unstained their anointed hands,
which daily touch Your Sacred Body.*

*Keep unsullied their lips,
daily purpled with your Precious Blood.*

*Keep pure and unearthly their hearts,
sealed with the sublime mark of the priesthood.*

*Let Your holy love surround them and
shield them from the world's contagion.*

*Bless their labors with abundant fruit and
may the souls to whom they minister
be their joy and consolation here and in heaven
their beautiful and everlasting crown.*

St. John Vianney's Prayer for Priests

*God, please give to your Church today
many more priests after your own heart.*

*May they be worthy representatives of Christ the Good Shepherd.
May they wholeheartedly devote themselves to prayer and penance;*

*be examples of humility and poverty;
shining models of holiness;*

*tireless and powerful preachers of the Word of God;
zealous dispensers of your grace in the sacraments.*

*May their loving devotion to your Son Jesus in the Eucharist
and to Mary his Mother
be the twin fountains of fruitfulness for their ministry.*



The ultimate end, or goal, of the RCIA is that the candidates become lifelong disciples of Jesus.

Deacon Roderick Pirotta RCIA Co-Ordinator, continues to inform us of all that the RCIA process truly encapsulates.

Contrary to many advertisements you see in our parishes, the RCIA journey is not about becoming a Catholic or for that matter, receiving the Sacraments of Initiation. Of course, these are particularly important milestones on the path. The ultimate end or goal of the RCIA is that the candidates become lifelong disciples of Jesus. The rites tell us that this includes not simply the celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, but is a process of listening and opening of heart to "the mystery of Christ proclaimed, and enter the way of faith" (paragraph 1).

On Saturday 27th June 2020, the 5 elect —

**Rosnah (Abi), Jenny, Lecky,
Nurerawady (Ady) & Brandon**

together with the RCIA team, spent an afternoon together in the Cathedral reflecting about these Mysteries and their journey of faith. They were given four questions to reflect on before receiving the Sacraments of Initiation. These were:

1. How did Jesus open my heart and mind through this RCIA journey?
2. What does the death and resurrection of Jesus mean to me at this moment – just before receiving your Sacraments of Initiation next Saturday?
3. Are you afraid to belief and proclaim to others that Jesus is truly "the Water that quenches my thirst", "the Light of the world" and "the Life everlasting"? Are you up to this challenge?
4. What special gift of the Holy Spirit, you would mostly like to receive? (Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgement, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence or Wonder and Awe).

They had readings from Scripture to inspire their prayers from Ezekiel 18: 25-32; Annunciation (Lk 1: 26-38); Apostles' call (Mk 1:16 -28); The Christian life (Romans 8: 2-8; Philipians 3: 6 -16; Psalm 23)

The day finished with the 3rd Scrutiny – the rising of Lazarus, one of the most dramatic scenes in the Gospel of John when Jesus cried out:

"Lazarus come forth

Unbind him and let him free" (Jn 11:43-44).

Truly, these are words of the ones who freely and sincerely are ready to receive the Sacraments. This is the moment when the elect accepts the Faith and 'conversion' of the heart has occurred. The candidates have come forward through the Holy Spirit and 'unbound' themselves from the old sinful ways to become a 'new creation' in the Lord.

Ready to receive the Sacraments, the parish accepted their request to receive the Sacraments of Initiation on Saturday 4th July.

It was a simple and moving Mass in which Ady, Abi, Jenny, Lecky and Brandon were Baptised, Confirmed, and received the Body and Blood of Christ for the first time. The Parish welcomed the new members of our community with a beautiful supper and a special cake for the occasions.

The fourth period of the RCIA journey is called Mystagogia, which means "leading into the mysteries". This period of Post Baptismal Catechesis aims to further initiate people into the mystery of Christ. Mystagogia is an initiation into God's continuing self-revelation to each one-of-us and is part of the ongoing adult faith formation process of all the baptised. While the Sunday Masses of the Easter season are the main setting for Mystagogia, this year we are continuing reflecting on the Sunday readings in Ordinary Times with emphasis on the Paschal mystery. (Liturgically we are not in the Easter Season and usually the neophytes and their sponsors continue to meet until Pentecost). This is an important period of reflection not only by the newly initiated but also includes the parish community. With the prayerful support of the parish community, their formation and teaching continue during this time to help the neophytes become incorporated into the full life of the Christian community. Mystagogia may perhaps be the final period of the RCIA catechumenal process, occurring usually in the 50 days after the Easter Triduum. It is, however, a much broader reality that is intended for all Catholics as lifelong ongoing faith formation. Mystagogia is the beginning of a lifelong pilgrimage and continuous conversion. To immerse ourselves in an ongoing mystagogical process we should continuously ask ourselves "How or where have I encountered God this week?" The question is mystagogical and will lead us deeper into the mystery, or ongoing revelation of God.

No better day to continue this journey than to conclude the RCIA journey on The Assumption of Our Lady on the 15th August. Mary was the One whose faith led her in a special place near Her Son and she was assumed body and soul to eternal life because She was the first to enjoy the complete fruits of the Paschal Mystery.

Deacon Roderick.



Following their initiation into the Catholic Faith, the Neophytes record the joyous event:
From L-R: Jenny, Lecky, Brandon, Ady and Abi flank Fr Bob, Deacon Rod and Fr Chris



Initiation during COVID 19



Finally, after having their Initiation at the Easter Vigil “hijacked” by the coronavirus, the time of waiting was over for the five Catechumens, Brandon, Lecky, Jenny Nurerawady (Ady) and Ros-nah. Their longing to become Catholics was realized on the 4th July at the Vigil Mass, celebrated by Fr Bob Bossini, in one of his final priestly duties as Dean of St Patrick’s Cathedral, a role that would cease the following day.

Covid’s presence prevented use of the Baptismal Font in the Blessed Sacrament for Baptism. Instead, each one presented themselves at the portable font situated before the altar in the Cathedral to be baptized, **“in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”**

Each person was then presented with a baptismal candle by their sponsor, lit from the Paschal Candle. A moment of great joy!

In Confirmation, the second Sacrament of Initiation, Fr Bob, anointed them with the Oil of Chrism, saying, **“Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit”** then, touching their cheek added, **“Peace be with you,”**

And to complete initiation the 5 came to the Table of the Lord to receive him In Holy Communion for the first time, food for the journey.

May they take to heart the words of St Augustine:

“Believe what you see, see what you believe and become what you are: the Body of Christ.”



Initiation achieved, the neophytes, RCIA Team and parishioners enjoyed a celebratory supper in the Cloister Function Room.

Fr Bob presented the new Catholics with their Certificates and then with joyful demeanours, Abi, Ady, Lecky and Jenny cut

the celebratory cake, with RCIA team members, John Starkey, Anna Bui and Harley in the background offering moral support. (You can just spy the top of Dianne Starkey’s head behind Ady — the penalty for being small of stature!)

On page 12 in ***Sharing the journey matters***, read comments from an interview our newest Catholics gave a week prior to their initiation.





The Journey to Faith continues beyond Initiation

One of the important things we have learned is that the spiritual journey never ends and that each Catholic continues on his or her own journey indefinitely

JOHN & DIANNE STARKEY

John & Dianne Starkey are members of the RCIA Team.

Below they stand behind Leckie and Jenny as their sponsors the night they were initiated into the Catholic Faith; and at right they present them with their lighted baptismal candles.

"Becoming Catholic" tells the story of their faith journey.



BECOMING CATHOLIC

Dianne was born into a Catholic family, was Baptised as a baby and attended a Catholic school throughout her education. Dianne had been one of St Patrick's parish scripture teachers with Paula Cowling, when Dianne and John's children were young and before Dianne went back to work full time. John was born into a Presbyterian (Uniting) family and was raised as a Christian. They met doing ballroom dancing and married in April 1982.

John and Dianne joined the RCIA when John became a participant in the RCIA programme. After attending Mass at St Patrick's at Parramatta every week since September 1981, getting married at St Patrick's and having their 4 children Baptised at St Patrick's, they were at a 9.30am Mass on Easter Sunday 2016 and were present for the Confirmation of a young man seeking to become a Catholic (now also a member of our RCIA team). John said he received the call to become a Catholic and thought "I can do that" as he watched the Confirmation ceremony.

John explains, "This was not a sudden decision. I had attended Mass with Dianne for 34 years and had encouraged our children to attend Mass regularly. I thought that because I was Christian and believed in God I was equally Christian but was just in a different "club" to Catholics. I continued to think that, until Dianne and I went to England in 2015 and I saw the carnage wreaked by Henry VIII on Catholicism, and had learned more details about the Protestant Reformation. It was at that time that I had an awakening that led me to realise that there is only the one true Church."

After seeing an adult receive the sacrament of Confirmation, John was inspired to enquire about the RCIA. Deacon Willy met

with John and encouraged him to come to his first RCIA meeting in September 2016. When he was at the first meeting, Deacon Willy asked whether Dianne (John's sponsor for his Confirmation) was going to come along. The second meeting they both went and they have been going ever since. After John was confirmed by Father Bob Bossini on Easter Sunday 2017, Deacon Willy asked them if they would be interested in coming back to assist him with the next group of enquirers. They took up this offer and have continued to be involved with the RCIA team over the past three years, even after Deacon Willy left the parish and Deacon Rod became the spiritual guide for the RCIA team.

John and Dianne believe: "As much as we are there to help enquirers, who later become *The Elect* (seeking Baptism and Confirmation) and *The Candidates* (who are already Baptised and seek Confirmation), we have both benefitted from this Ministry at a personal and spiritual level. We have met some wonderful and inspiring people, whose Faith Journey has strengthened our own Faith. We have extended our knowledge of the Word of God and have shared with others the understanding of the wonderful gifts given to us through the Sacraments and through the Holy Spirit. One of the important things we have learned is that the spiritual journey never ends and that each Catholic continues on his or her own journey indefinitely. It is not a matter of passing a test and then you have succeeded in achieving salvation. It is a lifetime work in progress, in which Baptism and Confirmation are just the beginning. The Neophytes (the newly Baptised) are at the beginning of this journey but we are also still continuing to work on our own salvation journey, just like the Enquirers, the Elect, the Candidates, the Neophytes and our fellow parishioners."

John and Dianne Starkey

Conversion Matters:

When Khushid Jilla's Conversion story featured in The Archdiocese of Sydney's Lenten Program 2011 Year A, she had been in Australia for 12 years. At a friend's urging Khush, as she likes to be known, agreed to submit her story for publication in St Pat's Matters.



Walking with Christ

I was born in India but have been living in Australia for the past 12 years. I come from a practicing Zoroastrian family popularly known as Parsis. It is a very ancient religion and belongs to the dynasty of King Cyrus, King Daniel and the Three Wise Men.

Zoroastrians believe in the teaching of Prophet Zarathustra who has revealed the supreme divine Authority Ahura Mazda -'The Lord of Wisdom.' The basic three principles that the religion revolves on are "Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds." My mother came from a family of High Priests and from childhood I have been a prayerful person. I visited the Fire Temple every day before I went to University and thereafter in my working life. Although, I believed in God, prayed regularly and visited the fire temple most days I always wanted to be of assistance to others especially the poor and needy I had this inner sense that these 'norms' were not enough. I was always curious about God and wanted to know more about God and raised questions about ancient rituals and wanted to know more. Years rolled by and I felt I did not get the answers I was seeking to the mysteries. I wondered about after death and even had a dream at the age of seven where I passed into after death and saw a light filled place with a throne, which made a deep impression on me. I just kept wondering looking for answers to this delightful dream.

As a child, teenager and young adult I had series of tragic experiences. I came from a broken family, soon my parents passed away. I had a tough life and at the age of 34 ended up lonely and jobless in Australia. To put it mildly, it was a difficult time for me. I used to sit and smoke and often looked up in the sky with questions such as "Why was I born? Where are you God? Why am I in this situation? Are you alive? Can you hear me God? And so on. I just sat and thought about these things for hours on end.

Then one day in 2002, I went for a walk intending to reach Malabar Beach in Sydney, not far from where I was living. I walked past St. Andrew's Catholic Church and somehow felt that I should go in. I don't know how to explain this, but I felt the church was calling me inside. It was a weekday evening and I thought the church might be closed. But to my amazement it was open. It was around the month of July. With some trepidation I went in and I truly felt something so real, a presence, the presence of God, But I could not understand it and I thought it was all too 'abnormal' and so after being in the church for a little while I ran away. The next day I came back again around the same time and again the church was open, It was dark and cold, but I felt a sudden rush of warmth as if someone was embracing me and I found myself crying. I could not stop crying and continuously kept asking myself "Why am I crying"? I continued to visit the church and started attending the mass. I could not understand the rituals and Catholic practices and I could not find answers from other Catholics either. In my search for the truth, I started visiting other Christian churches and prayer meetings. I

found other Christians had passion and fire about their faith in Christ and knew more about the Bible.

Around this time my thirst to know God was ever increasing and I found that the questions I asked God in the night were answered in the Bible. Once, I was asked by a friend, "What is important? Faith or Wisdom?" And I fell asleep pondering this question and agonising about it. I prayed to God and said to him, "please answer my question." And when I woke up the thought came in my mind 'You have to have faith. When you have faith you also get God's wisdom'. This led to another thought that I want to walk with my newly found companion and friend Jesus. I started welcoming him in my every day life. He walked with me, led me, spoke in many mysterious ways, unfolded mysteries to me and I began to keep my mind focused and open to him. My hardened and discouraged heart started having hope. I found a comforter in Jesus. I started experiencing healing of my mind, body and spirit. I got a job, I quit smoking. I was able to pay off all debts and I soon realized that I could manage my life much better when I walked with Jesus.

Now I know this might sound strange, too but in June 2006, even though I was praying Catholic prayers and the Rosary, I use to repeatedly get the prompt from Lord to convert so I kept denying as I felt a sense of loyalty towards Zoroastrianism. It was very confusing as it is not just a matter of culture or habit. It is much deeper than that. You live in this belief and are expected to die in it. I felt it was difficult to let go the traditional faith of my ancestors. I was interested in Christianity, as it showed me 'a way of life'. I loved walking with Jesus and the sense that God is 'Alive'. I loved the prayers. I had such extraordinary experiences since I now know Jesus personally but when the actual moment came to 'letting go' of the past, there was a struggle. I somehow thought I could continue with all the various Christian groups and religious searching without facing the ultimate question of conversion.

About this time I had a dream. I remember seeing an enormous light and I heard someone leading me in the rainforest. I heard a voice saying "Why are you so stubborn? Why don't you get baptized?" "In the dream I answered. "I am a Zoroastrian." Then I sensed that the voice was of Jesus and the next thing I saw a big water fall at a distance. On nearing the water fall, I saw huge drops of white light falling all around me and Jesus baptizing me himself. I woke up frightened and said in my dream "don't baptize me" and I heard the Lord saying "You are now one of us." I woke up with a start and said, "Thank goodness it was a dream". However, the thought prompted by the dream continued. When I was awake I asked Jesus "but why do you want me to be baptized" and the answer came to me 'Because I want you to do my work'. And I found myself saying something like 'Ok I want to do your work.'

In December 2006 I had the idea that I would go to a Mass and Holy Communion. At that time when I was thinking I closed my eyes in prayer and I was prompted to think of the Crucifixion and Our Lady standing beside the Cross.

continued next page

Sharing the journey matters

On Saturday, June 29th the week prior to the Initiation, Mary Brazell spent time with the Catechumens interviewing them for an upcoming article in **Catholic Outlook**. (published on 22nd July). Mary has given permission for their comments to be featured in St Pat's Matters.

Although Brandon grew up in the Catholic Church, he was never baptised or confirmed. Last year his Aunt, a parishioner of St Patrick's Cathedral Parish, told him about the RCIA meetings there, suggesting it was time for him to be baptised. He admitted, *"It took me a while to think about it, to be honest, because I thought that being 22-years-old, I should've been baptised and confirmed when I was a baby, and I was worried about what everyone would think. I overcame that fear, and realisedit's about my faith and about how I want to continue the rest of my life and be a proper Catholic,"*

Married couple Lecky and Jenny told Mary Brazell that undertaking the RCIA program together has made the experience meaningful.

"We joined the journey of the RCIA [program] to learn more, as our background is not religious, and we wanted to learn more about being Christian," Lecky said. *"Throughout the journey, we've learned a lot, and thank everyone in the RCIA program who has helped us a lot. We know that the whole journey will go through our whole lives."*

Jenny added, *"When I first went to church when I was a little kid, I didn't quite like it at the time. I wasn't ready. But now, it's a totally different journey."*

"We can support each other in our coming to the RCIA program, which is good because we learned what we are doing and the meaning behind it. That makes it much more meaningful."

Ady and Abi came to the RCIA program having baptised their children, though not being baptised themselves. Coming from a different religion, they both expressed the joy they felt upon learning about Christianity.

Ady said, "I converted to Christianity having gone through times of questioning my religion. In looking for the right religion for me, I requested to become a Catholic.

"The program is essential because this time last year, when I started the RCIA, I had different thoughts and understanding about what it really means to be a follower of Jesus and a Christian. The RCIA program has helped me to understand the focus and importance of becoming a true and full Christian."

Abi added, *"I didn't know about Christianity. My husband told me about Christianity, and the second he told me, my heart opened."*

When Mary asked the five what would it feel like to be welcomed into the Catholic family, they affirmed they were all excited for the day, despite the limitations in place due to the ongoing pandemic.

"I'm feeling excited for next week because I get to be baptised and I get a new life," Abi said with a smile on her face.

Lecky explained that it didn't matter how many people would be in attendance at Mass, *"it's a sacrament you can only have once in your life. It's meaningful for me. I've been waiting for this for a long time, I can't wait for it. It's a new journey for me."*

Ady said, *"I feel that it's unfortunate that we were not able to be part of the Easter celebration, but the celebration of Baptism and Communion is for the Church in spirit. When we are in communion in spirit, it's not just in Parramatta, it's throughout the world, and with all the angels and saints."*

For Brandon, being welcomed into the faith is going to be a "heart-warming" and "life-changing experience."

Walking with Christ by Khushid Jill from previous page

I was made to realize that Jesus on the Cross and Mary was pointing me to think of the Eucharist in a different way. I heard a voice say "Look at me this is what the Eucharist is, it is not just a piece of bread - this is why you have to be baptized." I found myself kneeling and weeping when my eyes opened and felt it was all so real and happening in front of me. This was a very important realization for me and I felt as if I had reached a turning point. I had realized the true meaning of Eucharist and why was it so important for me to be baptized I knew then that God wanted me to be baptized. I was baptized in St. Christopher's Church on 7th April 2007 on Easter day. I was on fire with love of Jesus in the Eucharist and in prayers.

My life has changed 180 degrees since then. I have found the living true God. I have found a true friend - JESUS.

Walking with Christ – Part II

In 2011, although I was leading a wonderful peaceful life in Sydney after my conversion, I felt compelled to return to Mumbai to care for my foster mother suffering from Alzheimer's. I was reluctant to go and pleaded with God to spare me from going back to India. After sitting in church for more than an hour the

thought came to me, 'the Lord came down from heaven to save us and here I am not even willing to return to India, to care for my foster mother, who has no one else but me'.

I dreaded returning to Mumbai because I compared it to Corinth in the Bible. After being baptised and going to confession every week, I did not want to go to a sinful city. A city of 20 million plus. A city that never sleeps!!! Population, pollution, corruption, where cheating is a way of life. It was with a heavy heart, I left Sydney reluctantly, hoping to return someday.

Looking after my aged foster mother was painful and difficult. I wanted to give her all the joy and happiness that I could offer. The biggest miracle I witnessed was praying the Rosary with her, even though she was Zoroastrian (Parsi) and did not know how to pray it. I felt immense joy praying the Rosary with her every day and often spoke to her about Jesus and how he paid for our sins. I do not think she absorbed it all, but at least she tried to pray the Rosary and would make a sign of cross. Whilst caring for her, I took up post graduate studies in Counselling and Psychotherapy. I met people from different walks of life, including two beautiful Nuns, doing brilliant work at a school for the disabled. I often visited their school to spend time with the disabled children. I also accompanied them to hospitals and nursing homes, visited slums, and did charitable and social work

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For the Faith Formation Session, ***“Repairing Wrongdoing”***, Fr Chris del Rosario was the presenter. It was also the last session that Fr Bob attended.

At the end of the session Michael Guillema spoke on behalf of the LCSC movement, saying, “We honour you, Fr. Bob for your dedication, support, and pastoral service to this parish.” Then people were invited to directly thank Father.

Michael then spoke in tribute:

I would also like to honour Fr Bob. If you ask me, I would describe Fr Bob, it will be in three ways:.

Firstly, he is a great encourager. When Marietta and I presented the LCSC movement to Fr. Bob back in 2015, we were an unknown entity. All we had was just the desire to serve the parish in its mission to evangelise. I truly believe that through the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Fr Bob embraced us, notwithstanding we were also in line with the Diocesan Pastoral Plan ***“Faith in our Future”***.

Fr Bob was always at our side serving as our spiritual adviser, planning with us, and attending most of our formation sessions. How can you beat that? Through his presence, he served as our morale booster and strength knowing that we could rely on him no matter what happens. His influence carried over to others as well. He encouraged his fellow priests and parishioners to support LCSC by giving talks on different occasions: — The likes of Fr Rizzo, Fr Chris, Fr George, Fr Michael, Fr John Paul, our own Annette Hartman, John Missio, Mili Lee to name a few.

Secondly, he is an outstanding teacher. I am pretty sure that everyone would agree with me that whenever Fr Bob gives talks, you can be assured of hearing a lecture, the content of which displays his incredible depth of Scriptural knowledge. I always feel that I am sitting at a university religious course. And of course, Fr Bob’s homilies at Mass, always full of meaning. I always make it also a point to read his weekly bulletin reflection to inspire me.

Thirdly, Fr Bob, is a faithful supporter. I can bear personal testimony to this fact. He went out of his way to concelebrate Mass for our community, *Missionary Families of Christ* at our conference last year and during the burial Mass of my late mother. He has also been instrumental in my discernment process to proceed in my Diaconate journey. I believe his endorsement and encouragement, helped me in my final decision. I am now looking forward to the possibility in the future of serving with him at Mass as a Permanent Deacon.

As you can see, Fr Bob has impacted positively on our lives in so many ways.

So, it is fitting on this occasion we say a big thank you to Fr Bob and allow us now to pray over you as a community.

Let us ask for God’s blessing upon Fr Bob.

Lord Jesus, Word Made Flesh, from the beginning of creation You named and claimed us for Yourself. Look with kindness upon your servant, Fr Bob Bossini, who will leave this Parish community with uncertainty during this crucial time, marked by Your cross, fed by Your Word, filled with our care as his flock here at St Patrick’s, and now sent to be Your presence to everyone he meets. Guide Fr Bob on the way, keep him in your heart always. Protect him in times of discouragement and loneliness. Bless him with Your wisdom and courage, that he may not be afraid no matter what happens during this crisis and that everything will come to pass. May Fr Bob continue to be a source of hope, friendship and love for a world in need. May the Lord bless him in every endeavour, protect him from all evil, and may he continue to inspire others to be ambassadors of Christ. We ask this through the intercession of Mother Mary, through you Lord, the Giver of life, through the Holy Spirit and through the mighty name of your son, Jesus Christ, who reigns with You, One God forever and ever. Amen.



On the last week of February, Michael accompanied by wife Marietta attended a Diaconate Formation weekend held at St Joseph’s Retreat Centre, Baulkham Hills.

Along with Michael, four other aspirants (three with their wives) were welcomed by The Permanent Diaconate community in the Diocese of Parramatta to begin discerning if they have a vocation in this ministry.

Keep Michael and Marietta in your prayers as they begin on this journey, which could end with Michael becoming a Permanent Deacon.



SRE MINISTRY MATTERS

Serving GOD & Community



THE 'NEW LOOK' SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMME

Under COVID-19 Rule:

For SREs, going to spread the Good News to Catholic children in the State Schools became a 'non event.'

Early on in the crises, some schools were happy for us to continue coming. However, Cecilia Zammit, Director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, considered it prudent to "pause" lessons until the situation improved, concerned for the welfare of all SREs across the Diocese — especially those in the "grey haired" category!

When schools did close, lessons were sent to schools to be posted online for interested parents to access during home schooling; and after reopening, the decision was made to have SREs return at the beginning of Term 3.

So those teachers who chose to return to classes when Term 3 began on July 20th, turned up 'bright eyed and bushy tailed' glad to be able to reconnect with students.

Maria below was one of them and was happy to comment on being back in evangelization mode. She's been volunteering for about 8 years now and double dips, taking 2 classes back to back: Year 1&2, then Years 5&6.



I was so thrilled to get back to teaching Scripture classes again at Parramatta East Public School after being away for four long months.

It was good to see that our lovely students are safe. They were mostly familiar faces and we also welcomed a couple of new students who'd come from other schools.

We spent the 30-minute class reflecting on how we've experienced God in the midst of the lockdown. We shared what good things and not so good things came about during this time.

We offered a prayer of thanks to God for bringing all of us back together once more. And with our eyes closed, we took turns in praying for someone we know who may need our prayers most, also remembering the sick, the poor and the lonely.

We took time to acknowledge how our hearts felt restless during this time of trial and concluded by reading from the board, prophet Isaiah's comforting words:

**So do not be afraid, for I am with you;
do not be alarmed, for I am your God
I give you strength, truly I help you,
truly I hold you firm
with my saving right hand.**

(Isaiah 41.10)

One student asked me, "How do we know if God is listening?"

I simply said, "We believe God is always listening and He speaks when we take time to listen through our prayers."

With great support from our parish, CCD and the school, I am ready to teach SRE again with a new found courage in these challenging times.

We know He's got this!

Maria Valentin



Commiserations for Meg Gale, Sacramental Coordinator (pictured), as she 'battles' to prepare the children for the second Sacrament of Initiation, i.e. their First Holy Communion.

Why is it a struggle? Well, the programme is still hampered due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The initial virus outbreak, which limited numbers attending Mass also put the whole programme on hold. This meant that the ceremony, usually celebrated on the Feast of Corpus Christi, unfortunately would not eventuate. Disappointment all round.

With easing of restrictions a revised calendar of sessions was to begin on 21st July, in the hall. But evidence of positive cases around the locality and limits to numbers gathering meant last minute cancellation of those meetings to be held on ZOOM instead.

There is supposed to be a practice session on Saturday 8th August for parents and children. And then proposal is to have two ceremonies to be held within Masses on the afternoon of August 9th. But as we go to press this is yet to be confirmed. With around 50 children to receive First Eucharist, the limit of 100 people in the cathedral will severely restrict family and friends being able to attend. There is the possibility of the Masses being live-streamed.

Whatever transpires because of this pandemic's stranglehold on human activity, let's focus on the positive of the whole situation. — that the children will eventually know the joy of receiving Jesus to nourish them sacramentally and to be assured that He will always be with them, in good times and bad.

May they become what they receive.

And may we, who have long had the privilege of receiving Holy Communion endeavour, with God's grace to always do likewise.

The editor admits, *MEA CULPA!*



In the last *St Pat's Matters*, in the article about the Parramatta Deanery Mass, page 7, I incorrectly attributed the brilliant homily (about the Vine and the branches) to the wrong priest!

Thankfully, Fr Bob Bossini brought the error to my attention.

Fr Paul Marshall (pictured) should have been credited as the homilist, not Fr Paul Roberts.

Adoration Matters..... & Thanksgiving, Too.



**Adore the Lord
Your God
and serve Him only**

**"What does it mean,
then, to adore God?
It means learning
to be with Him
to stop and talk with Him,
feeling that His Presence
is the most real,
the most good,
the most important
of all."**

Pope Francis

**"Adoration
is of
inestimable value
for the life
of the Church."
St John Paul II**

**"Adoration
is not a luxury,
but a priority."
Benedict XVI**

Let us always remember the comfort afforded to the faithful in having the Blessed Sacrament available for Adoration from 6am to 6pm during that initial time the virus severely affected our worship and gathering for Mass.

To be able to walk through the Cloister at any time of the day and see Our Lord looking at us from the Cathedral was consoling. Thank you Fr Bob and Fr Chris, for unceasing commitment to the spiritual nourishment and pastoral well being of the people of St Pat's and even beyond. You did so without fear, without counting the cost, trusting in the Lord always.

Thanksgiving for Living Bread

*Thank you, Lord,
because at the Last Supper
You divided the bread and wine into infinite pieces
to satiate our hunger and thirst.*

*Thank you, Lord,
because in the bread and wine you give us
Your life and fill us with your presence.*

*Thank you, Lord,
because You loved us to the end,
to the extreme that one can love:
to die for another, to give one's life for another.*

*Thank you, Lord,
because You willed to celebrate Your surrender
around a table with Your friends,
so that they would be a community of love.*

*Thank you, Lord,
because in the Eucharist
You make us ONE with You;
You unite us to Your Life,
in the measure that we are willing to surrender ours*

*Thank you, Lord,
because the whole day can be a preparation
to celebrate and share the Eucharist ...*

*Thank you, Lord,
because I can begin again every day ...
and continue my journey of fraternity
with my brothers and sisters,
and my journey of transformation in You .*

Fr Antonio Rivera

Thanks to Annette Hartman for sharing Fr Rivera's beautiful *Thanksgiving Prayer*.

Take a moment to immerse yourself in all it says.

Annette thought it reflected the Feast of Corpus Christi and had submitted it thinking it appropriate to use in the report about the children receiving their Holy Communion on that day.

However, we know all too well that the insidious presence of COVID -19 and its restrictions on church gatherings squashed the celebration of this significant milestone in the sacramental lives of ,many children along with their families.



JUDITH DUNN OAM FPDHS delves yet again into the lives of people who rest under the towering gums in St Patrick's Historic Cemetery.

We continue to be amazed at the extent of her knowledge of all its "inhabitants" and her boundless enthusiasm for educating readers about Parramatta's past and its populace.

Enjoy the two vignettes she presents in this issue.

History & Heritage matter

JOHN LACEY and the BEGININGS of the RACING INDUSTRY in PARRAMATTA

The first horse race in Parramatta was along George Street in April 1810, with the finishing post outside Andrew Nash's *Woolpack Inn*. Only two horses ran, *Parramatta* and *Belfast*, with the former obligingly winning the race.

To keep up the interest of racegoers as there was only one other race, — a trotting race won by mare *Miss Kitty*, — a cock-pit was dug near the track. Wagers were laid and the birds fought to the death with the bloodied winner carried off in triumph. Sack racing and wheelbarrow races were followed by the spectacle of the day — three vestals (not noted as ladies) ran up George Street, the winner to grasp the prize of enough calico to make a chemise (lady's undergarment) This event was very 'racy' indeed for its day! [Judith, pun intended?]

In 1817 John Lacey (Lacy) was granted an innkeeper's licence for *The Straggler Inn* near Boundary Street, south Parramatta, one of nine inns in Parramatta at that time. He took a great interest in horse racing and in June 1825 it was said,

"the spirit of racing was extending itself over the Colony very rapidly and the sport was likely to succeed very well at Parramatta due to the liberality of Mr Lacy in granting the use of some land owned by him as a course."

The first race on this course took place in October 1825, but the establishment of a race track was not without its problems. The Sydney Gazette in July 1826 advertised:

"It is respectfully requested by the COMMITTEE of the PARRAMATTA TURF CLUB that those Persons who so liberally subscribed to the Clearing of the Land and forming a Race-course thereon, will have the Goodness to say what their Subscriptions were, and to whom given. Word to be left at John Lacey's opposite the Toll-gate Parramatta, Mr Francis Peisley, Prospect (Fox Under the Hills Inn) and Mr Francis Lawless, no. 10 Pitt-street Sydney."

Obviously they had not been careful and organised in collecting money at first. Probably because of this episode, the idea of a racecourse continued to struggle. In 1829 an advertisement in *The Australian* newspaper read:

"To Let. Racecourse and Invaluable Estate. Apply John Lacey."

Lacey's idea of a race track was foundering, but the latter advertisement did the trick. On 26 August 1829, a Parramatta Race Fund Committee meeting was held at Mrs Walker's, *Red Cow Inn*. There it was decided to fund a Town Plate prize worth £50 and Lacey was to be paid £20 sterling for rent of the site. Joseph Kenyon (Kenyon's Road) was elected Clerk of the Course and Starter of the races was Robert Dunn (*Currency Lass Inn*) Booths or stands at the races were to cost 25 shillings and a cake stand just 10 shillings.

In 1832, 40 convict women were outside the gaol gathering twigs to make brooms. At a given signal they rose as one and evading their supervisors, ran for Lacey's racecourse. There they were plied with ginger beer and rum, one convict woman so bold she mounted a horse behind the jockey and completed a full circuit of the racecourse. What fun in an otherwise unforgiving life!

Mary Lacey died in 1834 at the age of 54 years and was buried in a vault in St Patrick's Cemetery.

Lacey continued with the racecourse and made extra money by standing his stallion, *Satellite* at stud at his inn for the season, an idea replicated by all the gentry in town at various inns. Costs were: One mare £4, for two or more mares £3, groomage included but with an extra 1 shilling a week for grass. Payment to be made to Mr Lacey previous to taking away the mares. Persons wishing to send their mares to *Satellite* were requested to intimate their intentions of doing so as early as possible to Wm. Marryiott at Mr Lacey's as the number to be put to him would be very limited. In the event of a miss, (no foal) the next season was free. Lacey also owned and raced, *Ploughballock*.

Other local gentlemen and their horses included: Samuel Otoo Hassall's *Worthy*. Mr Pye of Baulkham Hills bred the famous *Whalebone* which could trot at 16 miles an hour. Reverend Samuel Marsden owned an exceptional stallion, *Champion*. *Young Hector*, sired by the famous Arab *Hector*, stood at stud at Mrs King's Farm while *Traveller*, also by *Hector*, stood at Governor King's Farm. *Jock*, the bay horse of Mr Wentworth (Wentworthville) stood at stud at his other grant, The Home-Bush. *Junius*, another famous early racehorse, stood at Andrew Nash's *Woolpack Inn* alongside his own Arab stallion, *Abdullah*. *Hector*, said to be Governor Macquarie's horse, delivered a despatch from Sydney to Parramatta within one hour. Clearly horses were a very important element of colonial life.

Continued next page

Judith's Vignettes from St Patrick's Cemetery cont'd

John Lacey died in February 1842 aged 63 years, the forgotten instigator of the Turf Club. He was buried in the vault with his wife Mary. The racecourse continued to operate until St Patrick's Day 1847 when it moved to the site of the current Rosehill Gardens. John Lacey's vision of bringing racing entertainment to the people of Parramatta provided much needed relief against the harsh climate and convict regime.

Editor's note: My curiosity whetted by Judith's article I googled for more info about John Lacey. Here's what I found:

John Lacey was born in Dublin in about 1788 and was described as an iron founder. He was convicted in Dublin Court in Dec 1798 as a result of his involvement in the 1798 Irish rebellion. He was sentenced to seven years in goal but surrendered himself for transportation instead of serving a prison sentence. In the history of the rebellion, John is listed as a leader and his name appears on the Banishment Act that had been established to deal with the rebels. John was transported aboard the ship *Minerva*, to Sydney Cove 11th Jan, 1800

And another titbit:

Lacy, John, 50, free by servitude, *Minerva*, 1800, 7 years, Catholic, householder, Parramatta, 1080 acres, 415 acres cleared, 25 acres cultivated, 2 horses, 7 horned cattle.



**THE
LACEY
VAULT**

A rather unimpressive sandstone monument, for the instigator of the Turf Club and owner of racehorses.

**THE
DUNN
MONUMENT**

Much more impressive than the Lacey vault. Business at the **Currency Lass Inn** must have been very profitable!



ANN BELLAMY

Ann Bellamy's memorial stands out among the others due to her recorded age of 100 years. She arrived as Ann Fay, a convict on *Marquis Cornwallis* in 1796 and married William Bellamy in 1798. The marriage was recorded in St John's Church Parramatta which was not unusual for Catholics. Reverend Samuel Marsden was the Chief Cleric of the colony, which was a Church of England establishment. He decreed that anyone marrying in the Catholic Church was not really married, but a concubine.

To make their union legal in the eyes of the authorities, many Catholics married in the Church of England Church. Searching the records shows that many couples then went to the Catholic priest and married according to the rights of their own church – so were married twice. Ann's headstone reads

**Sacred
to the memory of
Ann Bellamy
Who departed this life
2nd January 1843
Aged 100 years**



The burial register entry records her as 103 years old. She was certainly a great age, but possibly not that old. Records vary, but her family obviously thought she was very elderly.

Maybe she looked 100 after transportation and a hard life under a harsh sun, rather than the softer climate of Ireland!

A matter worth consideration. *What does it mean to be a 'City Church'?*

In his letter in the Parish Bulletin of 19 July, Fr Peter Williams, as Dean and Administrator, expressed the desire to answer “*questions raised around the canonical status of the Cathedral Parish*” This he proceeded to explain in detail, tracing the history of St Pat’s elevation from parish church to a Cathedral as the Mother Church of the newly formed Diocese of Parramatta.

He also makes mention of “*a stable group of parishioners who see themselves as belonging to Parramatta....any suggestion that the Cathedral Parish could lose its unique identity or its juridical status in Canon Law is simply erroneous.*”

His reading of Fr Peter’s letter, prompted Martin Graham to consider the question: *What does it mean to be a 'City Church'?* He has allowed us to share his comments, originally posted on Facebook, here.

If we are not careful a city church could be no more than a sacramental filling station, with a small and disheartened ‘stable group of parishioners’ on its edges.

Of course, people from across the Diocese come to the Cathedral and are welcome, but those who regard themselves as parishioners are the heart and soul of the place, the participants in a local Christian community under God.

Parishioners are the people who regard the Parish as their spiritual home and only they can make it a welcoming place; it’s the locals who support one another in their needs, who fundraise to support Parish finances and to send our Parish youth to World Youth Days and other gatherings, who count the money we donate, who staff the barbecues and morning teas and lunches, who donate food for parish events and for local services such as the Jesuit Refugee Service, who reach out to non-church-going people in Parramatta, who run the St Vincent de Paul chapter for local people, who give religious instruction in local schools, who visit local nursing homes, who take Communion to the sick, who prepare local candidates for the Sacraments, and



who find the Parish to be a central part of their Catholic identity and take up its many opportunities for sacraments, prayer and spiritual development. [See ‘*St Pat’s Matters*’ for many other Parish activities].

Occasional visitors have no such commitments to this Parish. The Parish is where the rubber hits the road in this place, Parramatta. The Parish is where the Word is made flesh, right here. A skinny ‘City church’ can’t hold a candle to that.

And now it’s parishioners who have the most urgent legitimate questions about governance, about how priests and people of the Parish are being treated, about how the money given in good faith today, and by our forebears, is being used and what plans

are afoot; parishioners who are hungry for genuine accountability and openness from our shepherds, and are still unsatisfied.

We do need to *Save Our Parish*, or else be left with wonderful buildings, but without the very community for which the buildings exist.

Who remembers when we were 'just a parish church'?

Calling on long-time parishioners to dust off their memory banks and share memories of the building, the priests, the people, the celebrations — sacramental, social, special occasions — of St Patrick’s in pre cathedral days. i.e. from 1986 and earlier.

Email to M. Polizzi at balmap5@bigpond.com

Modern Mary (August 2020)

In April, we explored how the domesticity of lockdown had further compounded all those characteristically female duties, and removed the little freedoms mothers once had. I had never cooked and cleaned so much in my life. And home-schooling, let's not even go there.

This month, we continue to watch cases around us and wait. We know that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted women – working mothers in particular. We serve a very matriarchal purpose, but we operate in a world of patriarchal institutions. We're expected to work as though we don't have children, and to raise children as though we don't work. And now COVID doesn't even let us leave one and head to the other! Hear me out, Germaine Greer hasn't taken over the column, these are just the realities that women operate in every day! ...which COVID has exacerbated.

Experts have acknowledged that as childcare tends to fall to women, productivity losses across industries during COVID have been largely female. For example, during the pandemic, the amount of research published in scientific journals by male researchers spiked, while that of female researchers plummeted.

But it's not just our output that's compromised. The domestic violence unit at Legal Aid NSW has taken more calls for help in the past 4 months than it typically receives in a whole year, (1600 people rang in since 4 March, compared to the annual average of 1000). Online gambling, alcohol abuse and online child exploitation have also spiked during COVID, as we spend more time at home and online.

Evil has not stopped. In many cases it's evolved and grown further out of control. In the meantime, we're not all attending mass physically as often, and our spirits may feel like they're on hold.

Given this column is dedicated to commentary on life through a modern mother's lens, I thought it pertinent to consider how motherhood brings necessity to the fore. Necessary perseverance, regardless of circumstance.

Rain, hail or shine, a mother wakes up and feeds her children. (I invite fathers in our community to write columns about how they do this too, of course). There isn't often a day where you can opt out of the necessity of motherhood. You can't really put a child's scream on hold (I've tried). We have to keep going, keep working, keep moving. In or out of a pandemic, we carry on and we don't stop serving.

This week, Reverend Jesse Jackson, a champion of the American civil rights movement, was asked what he would want his eulogy to be. Speaking through the grip of Parkinsons, he said: *"I never stopped serving. I did my best against the odds. And when I didn't do my best, God's grace was sufficient. I thank God for seeing a new world. I lived to see Mandela come out of jail from prison in South Africa, ...lived to see an African American president... I see change coming. It's dark but the morning cometh."*

Whilst we're dedicated to service, we remain subjects of the institutions that govern us. Patriarchal institutions that are driven by profit or power. Motherhood seeks no ultimate benefit from either. Matriarchy, by nature, does not serve for profit, or sustain itself through power. Similarly, the Church, as the ultimate matriarch, ought not busy itself with these pursuits. It survives in service. Service of children, minorities, and those whose voices are muffled by the powers that be. The Church persists in service in the same way that mothers serve through sheer necessity. But those who serve do so within the confines of the patriarchy of the institutions that govern us.

All institutions become political, religious institutions are not immune from this. While patriarchs fight over power and profit, matriarchs continue to wake up and feed their children. The Church continues to rise above and feed its flock. Let our spirits not be put on hold for *anything*, pandemic or otherwise.

Share your stories with us at

modernmarymums@gmail.com

*Join the conversation about how on earth
to survive the challenging vocation of motherhood
as modern Christian women.*



**If you ever feel distressed during your day,
call upon our Lady.
Just say this simple prayer:**

*Mary, Mother of Jesus
please be a mother to me now.*

St Teresa of Calcutta said this prayer never failed her.

Victims of the Virus

How the Coronavirus affected me

by Geraldine Lilley

The coronavirus not only had the potential to strike people down physically, but also took a toll on the mental health of many, fearful of falling victim to contracting it.

The article featured here, written in April was not published in the last *St Pat's Matters* due to lack of space.

And with the possibility of a second wave of the virus on the horizon, will the barometer of fear once more also be on the rise amongst the populace.?

In Isaiah 41:10, God says “*Do not fear, for I am with you*”. Yet, the Coronavirus pandemic has many of us, me included, feeling extremely afraid and uncertain. It's hard not to feel afraid when faced with the reality of sickness and death here and world-wide.

Despite growing up in the faith, I've always had a major fear of death, causing great anxiety about the many circumstances that could lead to death. So the pandemic has filled me with dread, even panic. Initially I was extremely stressed travelling daily via bus to work in an area very close to a COVID-19 cluster. But despite my fear, I continued to work, reassuring myself that courage is not the absence of fear rather the ability to carry on regardless of the fear. However, as the virus spread, my fear spread to concern for those around me. My husband, brother and some of my workmates all have varying pre-existing medical conditions and because of COVID-19 they could potentially be in the high-risk category. So, I felt that travelling by bus each day was not socially responsible: the risk of catching the disease and passing it on to someone I love and care about was too high.

Initially I reduced my work hours from five to three days a week before deciding to take leave from work and stay home to avoid placing myself or others at risk. For once I totally trusted God to look after my husband and me. I had plans for how I would try to obtain enough money to pay the rent and bills and buy groceries, but there were no certainties. Surprisingly, placing my trust in God brought me a great sense of peace.

During the two weeks isolation at home, I'm surprised that I feel closer to God and the Church than I have done in a long time, utilising every opportunity to attend online Masses and prayer sessions. To begin with, I think my desire to engage in the faith in this way, was out of a sense of wanting some degree of normality in my life and wanting to still feel connected with others,

particularly those in our parish community, even though I could not physically be at Church. I have drawn closer to God and become more engaged with my faith through doing this, praying more and trusting in God more than in the past. Throughout previous personal dramas, I often questioned my faith, blamed God, and felt abandoned. To my surprise in this current crisis, I've not once blamed God — this is usually my default response. Instead, I feel more connected to Him, seeking His guidance in this time of uncertainty.

I belong to the Legion of Mary at St Pat's and we have even begun video conferencing weekly Legion meetings online via ZOOM. Being able to see and interact with all of the Legionaries online has given a sense of normality, despite no physical connection.

The hardest thing about the coronavirus crisis for me now is being unable to see my parents and brother and go to Church with them. I also miss going to the movies or out for a meal at a restaurant with my husband.

One lesson this crisis has taught me is to never take anyone or anything for granted; to appreciate everything from going on a daily walk with my husband to feeding the cockatoos on our balcony. Such simple activities now bring me joy.

Overall, I am still afraid, and don't expect this feeling will cease. No one knows what will happen; I now realise that life is always full of uncertainty, not just in this coronavirus crisis — God alone is the only certainty, the only source of clarity. If this crisis has taught me anything, it is that I need to lean on God more in the bad times, and also not forget about Him in the good times. Fear is a natural human response, but like the psalmist in 53:3 who states: “**When I am afraid, I put my trust in you**”, I hope to do the same.

WORTH NOTING:

HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT THE RED MASS

On 8th May, 2020, Silvana Rechichi sent the following email to me, as editor of our parish magazine. Thanks Silvana.

Dear Marian,

I read with interest the article, in the latest *St Pat's Matters*, regarding the Red Mass that took place on January 28th of this year.

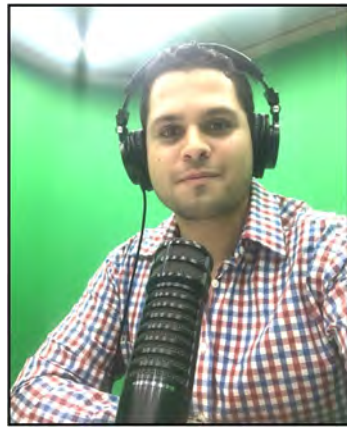
I noted in the article that this was the second year that the Red Mass was held in St. Patrick's Cathedral.

This is not entirely correct; the celebration of Red Masses were not new to St Patrick's. In fact these were regularly held at the Cathedral at the time when Fr John Boyle was Dean.

Ms Lois Hagin, whom you remember held the position of Chairperson of the Parish Pastoral Council, was a solicitor by profession and she together with Fr. John, promoted the celebration of the Red Mass, which was held annually at the commencement of the Law Year during 1991-1995. But the fire of 1996 put an end to the celebration of the Red Mass, pending the rebuilding process of the new Cathedral.

In the meantime, Fr John left the Cathedral parish in 1999 to take up his post at Seven Hills and Lois Hagin retired a few years later both from the Parish Pastoral Council and also from the Legal Profession.

By the time the new Cathedral finally rose from the ashes in 2003, the Red Mass had become a distant memory. No one of Fr John's successors seemed interested in resurrecting the event, that is, until 2019.



George Manassa, is the host and founder of **The Catholic Toolbox** Radio Show and Podcast, on **1701AM** (Live 8:00-9:00pm Syd. EST) on the **'Voice of Charity Australia'** Radio Network. He began broadcasting during Lent in 2019.

Our aim is to equip listeners with three practical solutions each week, to live the Catholic Faith in today's world.

If you enjoy listening to our radio show, why not consider emailing us at thecatholictoolbox@gmail.com to book in a time to speak or consult with us.

On July 14th in an interview with Fr John Rizzo on The Catholic Toolbox Show, we discussed spiritual warfare. Here are some insights from the show.

'We belong to the Church Militant; and she is militant because on earth the powers of darkness are ever restless to encompass her destruction,' (Venerable Pope Pius XII in *Discorso Di Sua Santità*, 1953).

In our modern world, especially within the Church's society, we are not exempt from being taken by the tide, let alone from acknowledging that there is a tide against us in the water. However, we need to encourage and remind each other, despite our state of life, that we must keep a firm eye on the true battle, where on the other side awaits our victory of salvation. In order to take action now in incorporating a spirit of militancy in our everyday Catholic life, adhere seriously to the following tools I have equipped you with, and you will have greater strength and the ability to carry on in your daily battle:

Invoke St Michael's prayer in the start and at the close of your day, and when you are feeling spiritually tempted by the devil. St Michael the Archangel will surely aid you, especially after Pope Leo XIII had a vision of hell and the devil himself. I also suggest a 10-minute reflection once a week on this prayer and the spiritual assistance it is able to provide us with as a

people of God in our daily spiritual warfare. Furthermore, I suggest incorporating this prayer during the close of your morning and evening offering, and, for parish priests, during the recession of the holy Mass.

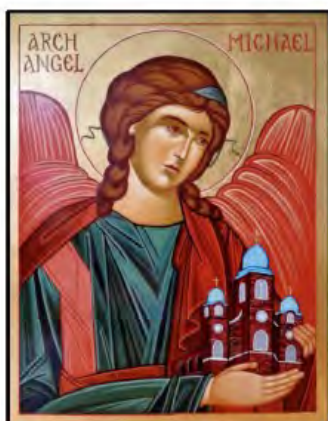
The use of sacramentals. This tool is strong, assuming that you are attending the sacraments and are in a regular routine of prayer. Furthermore, they are not magic charms that will perform miracles, but if your faith is strong, they will act to assist you, in a way that is directly proportional to the strength of your spiritual life. So, the power of possessing and placing a Benedictine medal (remember to have the priest administer the special blessing only) over your neck, in your pocket or car will dispel demonic influence. Furthermore, the blessing of one's self with holy water and exorcised salt (consult your parish priest for this) will aid you in fighting spiritual temptation. These three sacramentals for you to take advantage of will undoubtedly be efficacious.

You must then devise a temptation attack plan. Temptation is a very interesting area to analyse. To explain in warfare terminology, it is an ambush, designed to inflict spiritual damage when we are off guard. This echoes the words of the Lord's Prayer: 'Lead us not into temptation'. In other words, it is inevitable

in your life journey. This also acts as a great test of faith that you must live up to. This is what I like to implement as a three-second rule when tempted. When you find temptation to sin, count for three seconds and then start with St Michael's prayer, then proceed with two minutes of mental prayer. You will find that if this is executed correctly, it will be highly effective for you.

Editor's Note: George confirmed that there were over 5000 views with 11 positive comments being posted about the show. Just in June and July alone George's show had an impressive list of Hosts and Topics: Deacon Harold Burke Sivers — *Black Lives Matter*; Bishop Richard Umbers — *MEME-vangelisation*; ** Raymond de Souza KM--*Christianization of the West*, Fr John Flader — *Opus Dei*, Fr Bob Bossini — *Running a Parish during COVID-19* - Michael Voris STB — *Church Militant*.

** MEME-vangelisation refers to evangelising through memes, small comedy cartoons with a caption.



*Archangel Michael, Prince of all angels
Leader, defender of the heavenly hosts.
You are renowned for your mighty power,
Ever swift to obey the Lord's commands.*

*You cast out Satan with his evil spirits,
Be our protector against his wicked ways.
Archangel Michael, glorious leader,
Guide us to serve the will of the Lord.*

Pope Leo XIII's Prayer to

SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

*St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.*

*Be our defense
against the wickedness
and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him,
we humbly pray, and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.*

Cloister Cafe Matters

another victim of the virus



Hey Fellow Parishioners,

Remember us? We are members of the Hospitality Team, who miss serving morning tea to St Pat's people and any visitors after Sunday Masses at 9:30am and 11am.

The photo of the Hospitality Team members above, ready with welcoming smiles was taken shortly before COVID-19 forced us to 'cease trading', or rather close the kitchen. Denise Mendonca on the left and Patti Murphy at right are long time servers to the community, while Geanette George is a new kid on the block, having done duty a few times before lock out.

It's been months since the café doors were opened for the kids to rush in to grab a cup of cordial and check out what sort of goodies were on offer; to be followed by their parents and adults coming at a more sedate pace to line up for a tea or coffee.

So when the situation seemed to be on the upbeat some weeks ago, with restrictions eased, it was hoped the café might be able to operate once more. The proposal was put to Fr Chris del Rosario, who gave it the seal of approval.

The plan was to have the grand opening the first weekend in August. Team members were to be contacted to check their readiness to be included on the roster. The need for social distancing etc was taken into account.....but then BAD NEWS! The state of Victoria quickly succumbed to increasing positive tests to the virus, which invisibly and insidiously transmitted its deadly threat to NSW.

And with positive cases recently being detected ever closer to Parramatta in the past few weeks, the plan to reopen the cafe had to be shelved.....The question now being, "In the current scenario, when is it likely for café life at the Cathedral to return to normal, for the community to re-engage socially unencumbered, without the threat of the virus looming threateningly over us?"

WAITING...HOPING...AND.....PRAYING FOR HAPPIER TIMES.

CONVERSION MATTERS:

Khushid Jilla's story continued from page 12

for people living below the poverty line. One Christmas we raised funds and distributed blankets, clean drinking water and food. I felt immense joy in helping the poor.

My new Nun friends often visited my place and grew close to my mother. We would sit and pray together. (I am still in touch with them.). After completing my studies with high distinction I was invited to teach at Mumbai University. I also began facilitating my own workshops in empowering women and was often invited as guest speaker for YWCA and other institutions. Life had become extremely busy and hectic, but I always believed in giving ten percent of my day to the Lord, praying and attending Mass and continue to do so to this day.

I started counselling, specialising in Gestalt Therapy. It became second nature to invoke the Holy Spirit for guidance before sessions with my clients. I had great success with para suicidal and suicidal clients. I never thought, I would be brave enough to handle such cases, but with the Lord by my side and my supervisor's guidance, I was able to help my suicidal clients and people suffering from trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

When my foster mother died in 2014, I was devastated. It left a vacuum in my busy life. In 2016 I decided to return to Sydney and got a job at my old workplace. Sydney was five years ahead of me. Everything had changed, but I soon established contact with old friends. The time back in India had been meaningful and fulfilling. When I moved to Paramatta in 2018, I started visiting St. Patrick's Cathedral and now have a special connection with the parish. Fr Bob and Fr Chris have greatly influenced my faith and prayer life.

I often think the spiritual life is like the game of snakes and ladders. The Lord helps us to climb the ladder, but we keep meeting obstacles in one form or another. The evil one is always at a corner, tricking us in ways big and small, hoping to drag us down the ladder. It is important to keep our focus on the Lord, to not lose sight of him, to follow the right path, however difficult it might be.

Life is full of challenges and I have often found it very hard to choose the right path, but once I have made my choice, the Lord makes it easier for me to tread on it. I am still a work in progress and endeavour to continue walking with Christ, remaining strong in my faith and my love for the Lord!

+++ +++

Remembering Matters to Silvana

DOWN
MEMORY
LANE



Parish Christmas Party, 1998.

Photo 4 : the much beloved Paula Cowling, I don't know who the child is. Anyone recognize him?

Photo 5: Malinda Tugaga, Yvonne Malouf, Dorothy Soh and Dorothy Green, enjoying the festive fare in the lovely old parish hall, before it was demolished to make way for the construction of the new Cathedral.



In her fossicking through old photos, Silvana Rechichi, parishioner since 1968 unearthed this selection of snaps.

Photos 1,2 & 3

were taken during a celebration/commemoration, I don't remember what year. I think it may have been for the re-dedication of the mortuary chapel within the grounds of the old St Patrick's Cemetery, after its restoration. At the time Fr John Boyle was the Dean. Bob Carr, then Premier accepted Fr John's invitation to attend the ceremony at the Cemetery.



Photo 6: taken 20/11/2005 -

A Faith Formation initiative of the Parish Pastoral Council to pay a visit to our Christian neighbours of other denominations. On the day we visited the Parramatta Centenary Uniting Church, All Saints Church on Victoria Rd and St Ioannis Greek Orthodox Church in Parramatta. Who look's familiar?

Photo 7

is of the Parish Priest showing us the bread that is used for the celebration of the Eucharist in the Greek Orthodox tradition.



SHARE YOUR PICS!

Like Silvana take a walk down the memory lane of our beloved St Pat's.

Send in photos to jog the memories of long-time parishioners, but also to enlighten newcomers to our parish's long history.

balmap5@bigpond.com



Cathy our Photographer!

As always, Fr Bob graciously posed for photos.
St Pat's version of Celebrity Status!!

A Plethora of Parishioners were at Fr Bob's Farewell Function: These are the lucky ones whose faces found their way onto this collage. Commiserations to those who remain "anonymous". So, so many!!